(c) the number of persons from the Middle Management Group 'D' have been denied promotion under the comparative merit policy ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) and (b) Promotions in Job Group 'D' to 'E' are effected on the basis of merit-cum-seniority. This also takes into account qualifications, relevant experience, potential suitability, etc.

(c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Development of Oil and Gas Fields

291. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to the answer to unstarred question 3158 given in the Rajya Sabha on 18th March, 1992 and state:

(a) when was the decision in principle taken to allow development of small-sized oil gas fields in joint venture with private parties;

(b) by when Government propose to take the final decision in this regard;

(c) whether the FIPB has asked the Petroleum Ministry's opinion or views regarding seven large fields to invite foreign companies to explore;

(d) if so, on what date the FIPB asked the Ministry and on what date the Ministry conveyed its final opinion or views;

(e) whether some foreign petroleum companies have indicated their interest in the above, if so, their names and the current status of Government's response; and

(f) on what dates such proposals or intent of interest were indicated by each of the above companies ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) and (b) A decision in principle was taken in November, 1991. Detailed modalities for making the offer are being worked out.

(c) to (f) While some foreign companies have made presentations to the FIPB about their interest in participating in the development of preven oilfields and the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas was also involved in this process, no final decision in this regard has been taken.

Letters of Intent for Petrol Pumps

292. SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 3650 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 25th March, 1992 and state:

(a) whether it is fact that all the nine cases where Letters of Intent were issued were stayed for a review by the new Government in June/July 1991;

(b) the number of those which have been cleared after the review;

(c) the criteria adopted for the review; and

(d) by when the remaining cases are likely to be cleared after the review ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 2.

(c) Regular review and clearances are being carried out so that all genuine cases are expeditiously disposed off.

(d) No date can be indicated.

Economising ONGC Style

293. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) wheher Government's attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in the Financial Express of 30th March, 1992 under the caption "Economising ONGC Style";

(b) whether it is a fact that ONGC has ignored the advice of Government on

favours being given to foreign oil companies;

(c) the number of vessels which fly the Indian flag are lying un-utilised; and

(d) what steps are being taken to induce a more prudent tone in ONGC transactions?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Charter hiring of rigs by ONGC has been done after foreign exchange release was cleared by the Government. Government takes all precautions to ensure that no favour is shown to anyone.

(c) As far as rigs are concerned one Indian owned jack up rig which is undergoing repairs is reported by ONGC to be unutilized.

(d) Procurement of materials and services in ONGC is already done through competitive bidding.

Exploration of Oil and Gas in Rajasthan

294. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whehter any plan has been drawn up to explore deeply the desert sands of Rajasthan in quest for striking more oil and gas of commerical quantity and quality;

(b) if so, what are its broad features; and

(c) the outcome of the exploratory efforts made so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) and (b) During the 8th Plan (1992—97) ONGC and Oil India Limited have planned to carry out a total of 9000 SLK and 2550 GLK of 2D and 300 Sq. Kms. of 3D seismic surveys and 1,20,650 Meteres of exploratory drilling in Rajasthan.

(c) ONGC has discovered gas in Rajasthan at 5 places viz. Bhakri Tibba, Bankia, Ghotaru, Khartar and Manhera Tibba. OIL has discovered gas at Tanot, Ramgarh. Dandewala and Jalalwala in Jaisalmer basin and heavy oil at Baghewala and Tavriwala in Bikaner—Nagaur basin.

Shortage of Petroleum Products in Madhya Pradesh

295. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many parts of Madhya Pradesh are facing acute shortage of petrol and petroleum products since February this year;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that oil companies are not supplying requisite quantity of petrol and petroleum products to Madhya Pradesh;

(d) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(e) what remedial action Government have taken or propose to take to make petroleum products easily available in Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) to (e) Occasional shortage of petroleum products were experienced in certain areas of Madhya Pradesh such as Indore, Ratlam, Gwalior, Nishadpura etc. due to two railway accidents, partial shortage of tank wagons and inadequate availablity of tank lorries for transportation by road. All possible efforts are made to remedy the situation whenever any shortages occur in any area.

Additional Gas Cylinder

296. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the Press reports appearing in various newspapers in Madhya Pradesh wherein it has been alleged that LPG dealers in Madhya